

memorandum

DATE:

REPLY TO
ATTN OF:

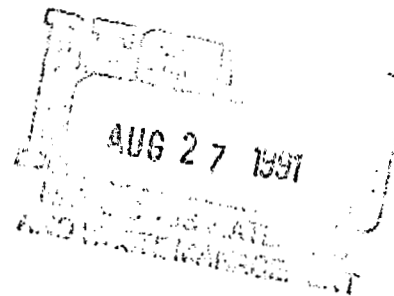
WMED:JW: 6646

SUBJECT:

Solar Pond Clean Out Project

TO:

Mr. Gary W. Baughman, Unit Leader
Hazardous Waste Facilities
Hazardous Materials & Waste Management Division
Colorado Department of Health
4210 East 11th Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80601



Dear Mr. Baughman:

1. Reference the December 12, 1990 meeting between the U.S. Department of Energy-Rocky Flats Office (DOE/RFO) and the Colorado Department of Health (CDH).
2. Reference the December 21, 1990, DOE/RFO letter to Dr. Fredrick R. Dowsett.
3. Reference the January 24, 1991 meeting between CDH, RFO and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to discuss plans for containment and treatment of the solar pond french drain water.
4. Reference the January 29, 1991 meeting of the Rocky Flats Environmental Monitoring Council including the presentation on the Solar Pond Cleanout Program by the DOE/RFO.
5. Reference the April 4, 1991 CDH letter from Mr. Gary W. Baughman.
6. Reference the June 13, 1991 DOE/RFO letter to Mr. Gary W. Baughman.
7. Reference the June 24, 1991 CDH letter from Mr. Gary W. Baughman.

The references listed above are provided as a historical synopsis of recent efforts on the solar pond cleanout project. Issues surrounding the permitting of the proposed surge tanks and portable evaporators for this project are specifically highlighted by most of these references. The background information will allow you to better understand how we proceeded in preparing packages for permitting these units.

We initiated many accelerated actions on this program to meet the intent of the Agreement in Principle (AIP) between DOE Secretary Watkins and Governor Roy Romer. Of course, we subsequently told Governor Romer that we could not meet the original schedule proposed for cleanout of the solar ponds, but we have still maintained aggressive schedules for cleanup activities.

ADMIN RECORD

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As a result of our aggressive approach to this project and the recent direction from you to initiate the interim measure/ interim remedial action (IM/IRA) process for the surge tanks and portable evaporators, new issues have surfaced. Your staff has been diligently working with my staff to complete the required IM/IRA package, but we still believe this overall process can adversely impact our program schedule in spite of our best efforts.


We completed engineering designs, procured and are installing portable evaporators under the assumption that we would receive a change to interim status approval (reference 2 above). The requirement to develop an IM/IRA package on these units has added significant delays which were not originally estimated in either our schedules or costs for the project. The IM/IRA process may also add schedule impacts through effects on engineering design packages from the public comment period, although we are confident our proposals provide the most expedient solutions to protecting the environment.

The effect on the program schedule will not be as serious if we could complete procurement and sealing of the surge tank material prior to the November 1, 1991. The sealing process for the tank units and secondary containment systems must be performed in the area of tank installation (outdoors) and while the temperature is above 50° F. If we wait until the end of the public comment period before we procure these tanks, it may be early spring 1992 before we can complete installation of these units. This will have a subsequent effect on our schedule to commence sludge removal and solidification. The overall project schedule impact could be approximately 6 months.

To overcome this issue, we propose two potential solutions: 1) Resubmit the package as a request for change to interim status for this action and obtain approval to construct the surge tanks, or 2) Obtain approval to construct (but not operate) the surge tanks prior to completion of the IM/IRA process. There is, of course, a potential for public scrutiny of either of these decisions, but we can provide sufficient engineering justification for these efforts and could utilize either unit (evaporators or tanks) for other plant operations in the event public pressure dictates another solution for this action. It should also be noted that we provided an in-depth presentation of our plans to cleanout the solar ponds at reference 4 above, so our actions should not be unknown to the public.

As we have discussed previously with you, actions to quickly complete this project were motivated by both the AIP and the need to eliminate a source term of contamination to the environment. Thus, decisions to pursue certain treatment alternatives to meet schedule constraints were made based on our understanding that permitting actions would be performed as changes to interim status instead of through an IM/IRA process. We now request your assistance in providing us an approval mechanism to initiate construction activities for the surge tanks as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Thomas E. Lukow of my staff at 966-4561.


David P. Simonson
Assistant Manager
for Environmental Management

cc
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